

Going forward, we are going to need fossil fuels for probably as far as the eye can see. We are going to need natural gas. We are going to need petroleum. We are going to need them for our homes. We are going to need them for our buildings. We need them for our businesses.

Let me just tell you something else. The State of Delaware is sinking. My State is sinking. Seas around us are rising. My State is sinking. Down in the Gulf of Mexico, the State of Louisiana, during the next 100 minutes, they are going to lose a piece of land to the ocean the size of a football field.

A month or two ago, when they had the big French bicycle race that they have every year, they had to literally stop the race in parts of the Tour de France because the road was melting.

We are seeing sea levels rise. It is not imaginary. It is actually happening. In 10, 20, 30, 40 years—when these pages down here are my age—it is going to be one heck of a problem. And the question is, Are we going to do anything about it? Are we going to do anything about it in ways that create jobs and economic opportunity?

We can walk and chew gum at the same time, we can address climate change, we can address global warming, and we can create jobs and economic opportunities. There are plenty of ways to do that. We have shown that in the IRA, or the Inflation Reduction Act, and also in the bipartisan infrastructure bill. We need to do more of the same.

That is not why I came here. I came here to talk about three separate but important topics.

RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT

Madam President, let me start by turning to the tragedy that took place just a week and a half ago. On the morning of November 2, the community of Colorado Springs, CO, woke up to the devastating news that 5 people were killed, and another 25 were injured, at the hands of a shooter.

While we are still learning the details about this horrific incident, this much is clear: The shooter chose to target an LGBTQ-friendly establishment.

Hate has no place in this nation. It never has and, hopefully, never will. It is up to each of us as individuals to root out hate when we see it and enact change in order to fix it.

It is not every day that the Senate comes together to pass bipartisan legislation, although we do it more than most people would expect. But, yesterday, we did just that with a majority vote of 61 to 36 to reaffirm to our Nation's LGBTQ community that we believe that every adult deserves a right to marry whom they love—no matter their race, gender, or sexual orientation.

I was honored to lend my support for the bipartisan Respect for Marriage Act to protect that sacred and fundamental right to marry for all Americans in the First State and throughout our country.

This is a historic moment for our country and a testament to what can happen when policymakers embrace the golden rule: Treat other people the way you want to be treated. The Golden Rule is in every sacred scripture of every major religion in the world. I don't care if you are a Jew. I don't care if you are Protestant. I don't care if you are Catholic. I don't care if you are Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim. They all have the Golden Rule in there: Treat other people the way you want to be treated. And I think that is really the thread that underlies the legislation that we enacted yesterday with bipartisan support.

Madam President, as many of us in this Chamber know, for the past 7 years, marriage equality has been the law of the land. It has been the law of the land. It is nothing new. It has been the law of the land for the last 7 years, thanks to the Supreme Court decision in something called Obergefell—I mangled that; I am sure others have as well—v. Hodges. That is the decision of 7 years ago. The basis of this is the law of the land.

Former Justice Anthony Kennedy, who was appointed by President Reagan, wrote in his majority opinion of that—and I am going to quote him. He said:

No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family.

His words—I could not have said it better.

Americans deserve the constitutional right to enter into that profound union, marriage, with the person they love—and the person who loves them as well.

However, earlier this summer, the Supreme Court overturned nearly 50 years of precedent protecting a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. And tucked away in that radical opinion, Justice Thomas cast doubt on whether the Constitution protects marriage equality.

Let me be clear. Yesterday's bipartisan vote to protect same-sex marriage said that we are not going back.

LGBTQ Americans can now rest assured they are afforded equal dignity under the law. I look forward to this bill being signed into law by President Biden soon to make it official.

RAILWAY LABOR MANAGEMENT DISPUTE

Madam President, let me move along to my second topic, which I hope can yield similar levels of bipartisan agreement, and that is support for our Nation's rail workers.

Let me first state my strong support for freight rail transportation and the hard-working men and women who keep our Nation's trains—both passenger trains and freight trains—both rolling fine and running on time.

This issue is personal to me, not only as someone who commutes on an Amtrak train most days to work here at our Nation's capital but as the grandson of a railroader. My grandfather was a fireman on the B&O Railroad in West

Virginia for many, many years. My sister and I would love to listen to my grandfather tell us great stories about railroading in those days. I have had a love affair with trains ever since I was a little kid.

Many of us know that freight rail keeps our economy moving. I didn't know that when I was a kid, but it does. It did then, and it does now. We don't often discuss that freight rail does so in a way that is better for our planet—better for our planet.

Let me tell you what I am talking about. Moving freight by rail is some four times more fuel efficient than moving freight on the highway. I will say that again. Moving freight by rail is some four times more fuel efficient than moving freight on the highway. In fact, freight trains can move—think about this—1 ton of freight from Washington, DC, to Boston, MA—1 ton with 1 gallon of diesel fuel, 1 gallon.

This morning, I rode on an Amtrak train with hundreds of people on board. The train was sold out, and we did it using no diesel fuel. We used electricity. A lot of it was generated by nuclear, offshore wind, and so forth.

At a time when scientists tell us that we must dramatically reduce carbon dioxide emissions—and we must—in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, we can't afford to shut down the most fuel-efficient way of moving freight over land in this country.

Freight rail isn't just important for reducing emissions but also critical for keeping our economy humming. Our Nation's most trusted economists all agree that a rail shutdown would be devastating for our economy—devastating. Hundreds of thousands of Americans, many of them union workers, could be put out of work in just the first 2 weeks of a shutdown. And a shutdown could also leave many communities without the necessary chemicals for maintaining clean drinking water. That is why President Biden is calling on us in Congress to pass legislation immediately—not next week, not next month, immediately—to adopt a tentative agreement made in September.

He did not come to this conclusion lightly and neither do I. President Biden is, by almost any estimation, the most pro-labor President we have had in my lifetime. Secretary Walsh is the first union leader to lead the Department of Labor in more than half a century. People think he was the former mayor of Boston. No, no, he was also the president of a major labor union in Massachusetts. Both of them are saying that Congress should intervene in supporting the agreement that 8 out of the 12 rail labor unions are supporting.

The contract agreement that the Biden administration helped negotiate recognizes the importance and dignity of our Nation's rail workers. The deal provides a historic 24-percent pay raise for rail workers and improved healthcare benefits. Eight out of the

twelve unions involved in these negotiations think that is a pretty good deal, and they voted to approve the agreement.

Still, we find ourselves in this scenario because railroad companies won't budge on granting railroad workers any paid sick days. That is wrong and something we should work to address but not at the risk of a devastating rail shutdown.

My colleagues and I do not take lightly the notion that Congress is intervening in a labor dispute. We don't normally do that. In this case, there is a lot at stake. Today, our House colleagues passed legislation, I am told, to avert a rail strike. I think the vote was overwhelming—290 to 137. I am hopeful we will do the same in the Senate well before the December 9 deadline.

TRIBUTE TO CAROLYN MACK AND CAROLINE JONES

Madam President, last but not least, I want to take a moment to recognize two terrific members of our staff on the Environment and Public Works Committee, which I am privileged to lead along with Senator SHELLEY CAPITO.

Two of our finest are going to be leaving us this week. Carolyn Mack, our committee operations manager, departs our office today, which coincidentally is her birthday day. She is retiring after 29 years of Senate service.

Carolyn came to the Environment and Public Works Committee 21 years ago when, I think, Jim Jeffords was our chairman. She has faithfully served not one, not two, but three EPW chairs, including Senator Jeffords, Senator Boxer, and now yours truly.

Many of our colleagues have heard me say that Senators cannot do all that we do without our staff. I hire people smarter than I with better hearts and minds. Carolyn is right up there at the top. Quite simply, she is the heart and the soul of our EPW operations. Everyone in the Senate buildings, from the furniture department to the parking staff, including the graphics department, knows, loves, and respects Carolyn.

At her recent retirement party, Carolyn reflected on what she liked about her job. Here is what she said: "I like to help people." That is what she said: "I like to help people." What a humble and lovely way to view one's job in the U.S. Senate—namely, that it is something that comes and flows from wanting to serve.

We are grateful for Carolyn's help all these years and wish her the very best in retirement.

Lastly, also departing Saturday is Caroline Jones. Caroline started with us at EPW 4 years ago as an intern. The Presiding Officer knows how important interns are to us. It is like a farm system, if you will, of a great staff.

She has blossomed into an integral member of our staff, working with our climate and clean air team. This year, she was the lead for us working to rat-

ify the Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol, something that she did an incredible job with as we phased down HFCs, hydrofluorocarbons, which are a thousand times worse than CO₂ in terms of climate change. And it not only did that, but provides jobs—not just climate change but provides jobs—thousands, tens of thousands of jobs—and billions of dollars of economic opportunity. She gave us a big assist on the plate with that.

But we will miss Caroline's attention to detail, and we are going to miss her hard work. But we know she is not going too far. She is joining the staff of the Federal Highway Administration's climate office. We know she will bring her talents to that office, and they will be the better for it, as will our country.

You can leave the payroll, but you can never leave "Carpertown." As they say in the Eagles in "Hotel California," "You can check out, but you can never leave."

That certainly is true in this case.

As we say to our departing staff members, we say in the Navy, wishing you fair winds and following seas.

God bless you both.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF CAMILLE L. VELEZ-RIVE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate continues the important work of confirming highly qualified, diverse nominees to the Federal judiciary, as we take up the nomination of Judge Camille Velez-Rive, who has been nominated to the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Judge Velez-Rive has served as a magistrate judge for the District of Puerto Rico for the past 18 years. In that time, she has presided over 20 jury trials and six bench trials, including both civil and criminal proceedings.

Before joining the bench, Judge Velez-Rive was an associate at a San Juan-based firm, where she practiced for 3 years. She then served as an assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico for 6 years. During that time, she worked for 2 years within the criminal appellate division, briefing more than 80 criminal appeals and arguing 10 appeals before the First Circuit. Judge Velez-Rive then spent 4 more years in the civil division, handling approximately 65 cases.

Judge Velez-Rive earned her B.A. with college honors from Washington University in St. Louis and her J.D. magna cum laude from the University of Puerto Rico Law School. After graduating, she went on to clerk for the Honorable Francisco Rebollo-Lopez on the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The American Bar Association has unanimously rated Judge Velez-Rive as "well qualified" to serve on the District of Puerto Rico.

As a long-serving Federal judge with extensive trial experience, Judge Velez-Rive is highly qualified to continue her service to the District of

Puerto Rico as a Federal district court judge.

I look forward to supporting this well-qualified nominee and urge my colleagues to join me in doing so.

NOMINATION OF ANNE M. NARDACCI

Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Anne Nardacci to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York.

Ms. Nardacci is a seasoned practitioner with a broad range of litigation experience and deep ties to the Northern District.

She was born in Albany, NY, and attended Georgetown University and Cornell Law School before beginning her legal career at Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom in Manhattan. There, Ms. Nardacci specialized in merger review and antitrust litigation.

Since 2005, she has worked at Boies Schiller Flexner LLP in Albany, where her practice has focused on complex commercial litigation, including antitrust, fair competition, bankruptcy, and fraud matters. Throughout the course of her career, Ms. Nardacci has represented large companies, small businesses, and classes of individuals. Impressively, 90 percent of her practice has been in Federal court.

Despite her demanding career in private practice, Ms. Nardacci has managed to dedicate a significant portion of her time to pro bono work. She has defended the civil rights of inmates and represented survivors of domestic abuse.

Ms. Nardacci's distinguished career is a testament to her commitment to equal justice under law. She received a "qualified" rating from the American Bar Association and has the strong support of New York's Senators, Mr. SCHUMER and Mrs. GILLIBRAND.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this outstanding nominee to the Federal bench.

VOTE ON VELEZ-RIVE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Velez-Rive nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 42, as follows: